

## CORRESPONDENCE.

The Editor,

NEW ZEALAND LIBRARIES.

Sir,—

May I bring to your attention the need for some suitable form of training in librarianship for New Zealand conditions. Excellent though it is, the syllabus of the London Library Association does not provide quite what is required in New Zealand, and the course covers a great deal of extraneous matter of purely academic interest, which, while of value, is of little practical use to the New Zealand librarian, who is sometimes completely at sea about the rudiments of library technique.

I would not advocate displacing the London examinations. They fulfil a function that nothing else can, particularly as regards assistants in the larger libraries. But I do feel that there is need for some severely practical form of training, to be conducted by correspondence or in summer schools, and to be tested and acknowledged by the grant of a certificate or certificates.

There seems no reason why a panel of contributors should not compile an instructional manual to cover a syllabus, printing the articles as completed in NEW ZEALAND LIBRARIES, and so provide a text book for librarians and assistants in smaller places, as the Schools' Section is providing a text book for school librarians. Something of the following nature is suggested as a syllabus:

*First ticket (for pass as qualified assistant).*

1. Principles of Classification, and the Dewey Decimal Classification.
2. Elementary Cataloguing, Indexing and abstracting.
3. Lending Work: book-charging, fees, rentals, overdues. Systems in Free Libraries.
4. Reference Work, Periodicals, Co-operation with local organisations, library exploitation, publicity.

*Second ticket (for pass as qualified librarian) —to be taken only after the first course.*

5. N.Z. library law and finance, rates, estimates. The municipal structure. Unionism and the I.C. and A. Act, salary standards.
6. Library administration and co-operation. The C.L.S. and Free Libraries; the N.Z.L.A.
7. Book-buying, sources and methods; the Associated Booksellers of New Zealand; order and accession.
8. Library building, layout, lighting, heating, equipment—options:
  - (a) Large and medium municipal libraries.
  - (b) Small municipal libraries.
  - (c) School libraries.
  - (d) College and special libraries.

Yours, etc.,

"INTERESTED."

*[The opinions of other members would be welcomed.—Ed.].*

## THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY LIBRARY, WELLINGTON.—PAST AND PRESENT.

*By Mr. J. O. Wilson, A.L.A., General Assembly Library. Part I.—Historical.*

At the third session of the first Parliament in 1856, a Select Committee of the House recommended that £100 be placed on the Estimates for the provision of a library. It is from this small beginning that the present Parliamentary Library, as it is more commonly known, has grown. In 1865 the collection was moved from Auckland to Wellington, where it has remained ever since.

By 1872 the library contained 8,000 books, a figure which had grown to 15,000 by 1875. At this date a Royal Commission was set up to consider the housing of the library, and it recommended that a building to cost £14,000 be erected. Unfortunately economic conditions

prevented this and it was not until 1899 that the present building was completed—the old Wellington Provincial Council buildings serving the purpose in the meantime. By 1900 there were 50,000 volumes, and to-day there are 150,000.

The Library has been fortunate in its staff. Mr. McGregor, Librarian from 1881-85, among other things, absorbed into the collection the stock of the Wellington Provincial Council Library, and bound 196 volumes of pamphlets, a source to-day of much valuable material on the history of those times. He was followed between 1885 and 1890 by James Collier, who was formerly amanuensis to Herbert Spencer,